

THE VILTRUMITE WAR

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INVINCIBLE



ROBERT KIRKMAN
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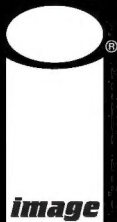
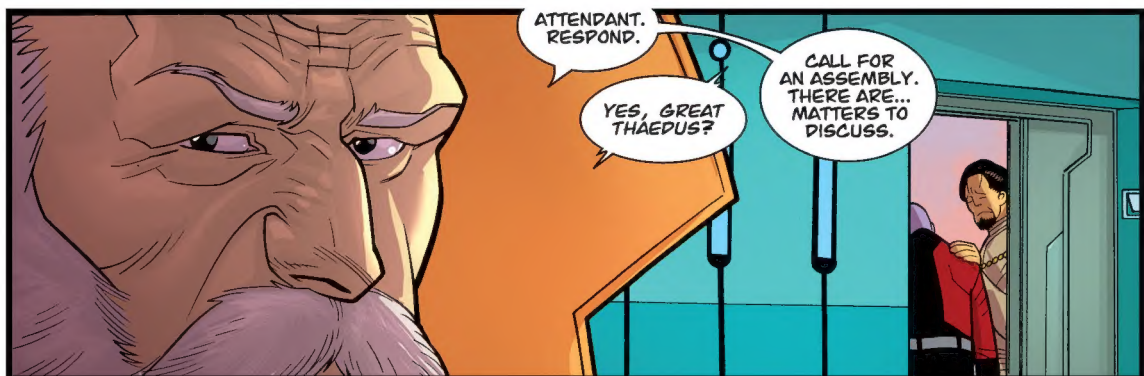
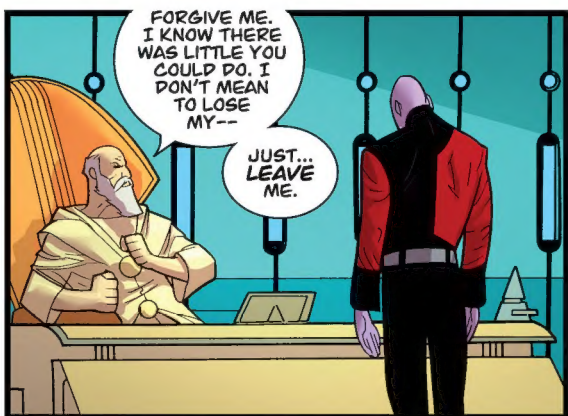
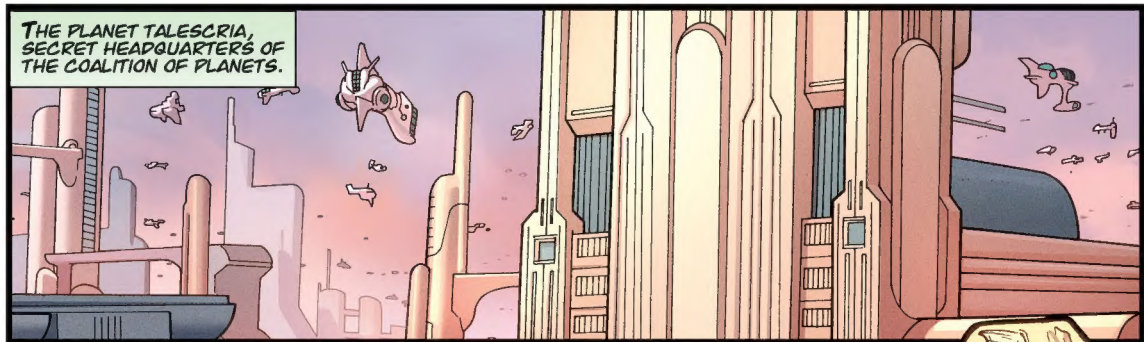


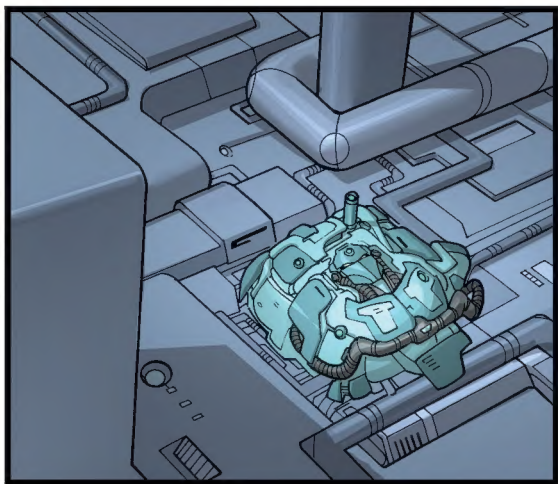
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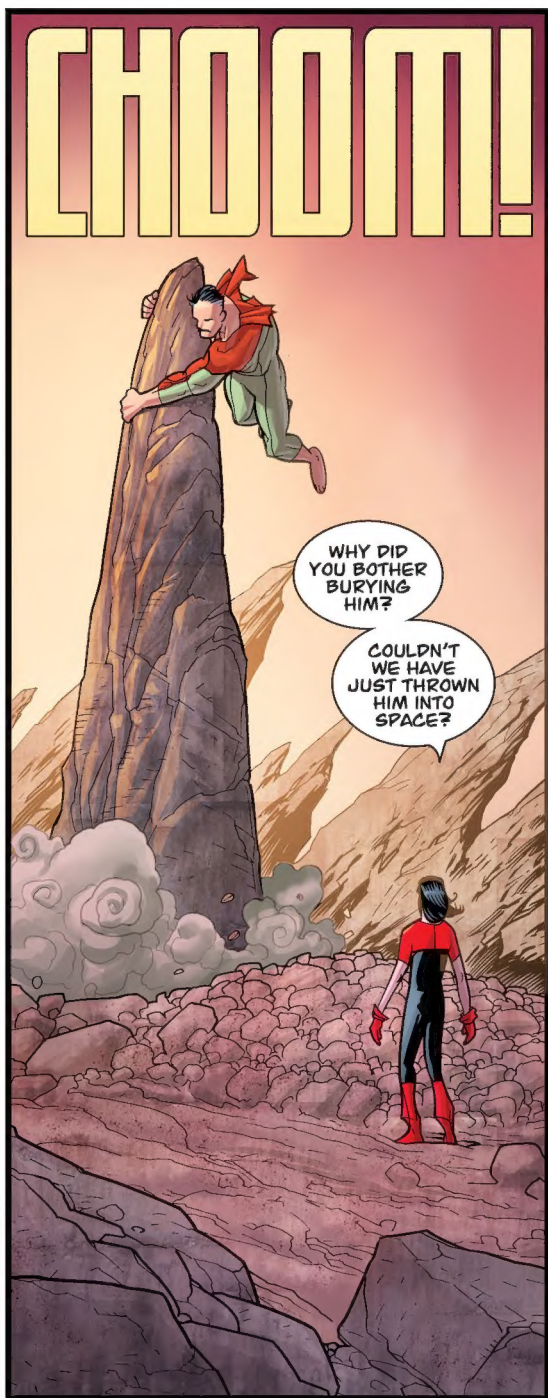
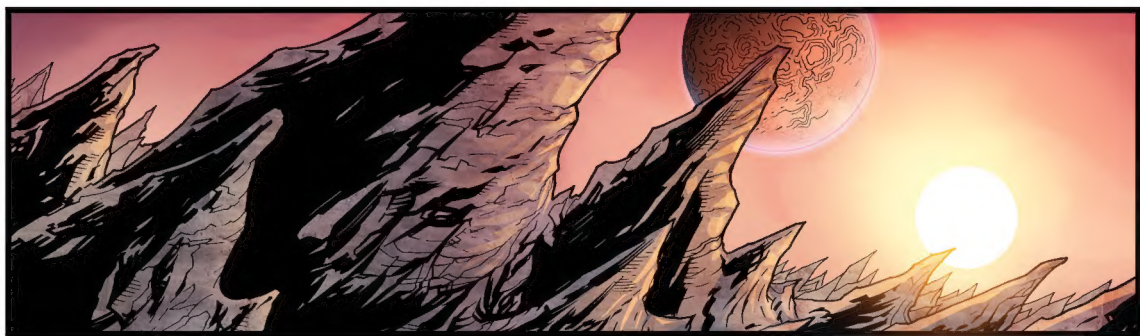
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WHY DID YOU BOTHER BURYING HIM?

COULDN'T WE HAVE JUST THROWN HIM INTO SPACE?



ALTHOUGH HE LOST HIS WAY IN HIS LATER YEARS, CONQUEST WAS THE GREATEST OF VILTRUMITE WARRIORS.

THAT DEMANDS A CERTAIN LEVEL OF RESPECT, DESPITE HIS ACTIONS. HE DESERVED A PROPER BURIAL.



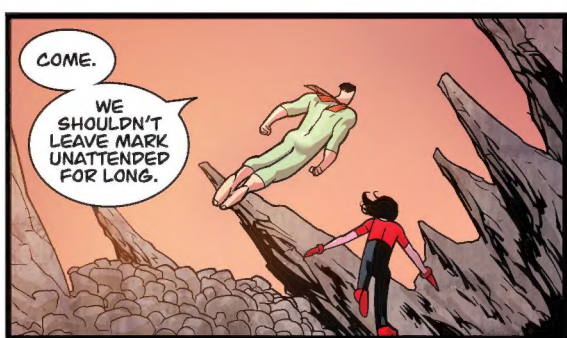
HE DESERVED TO ROT IN THE SUN.

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT THIS GUY'S DONE.



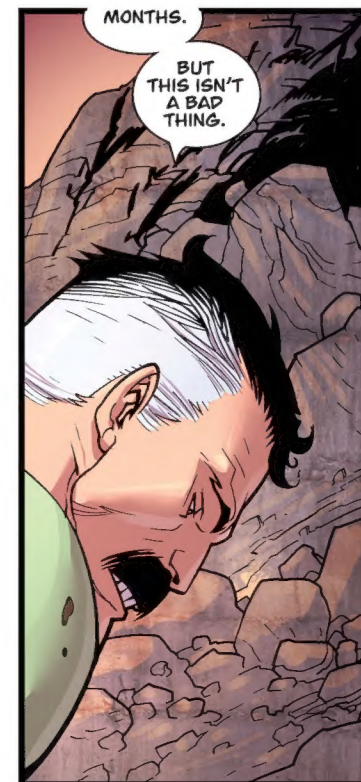
EVERYTHING HE'S DONE WAS IN SERVICE TO THE VILTRUMITE EMPIRE.

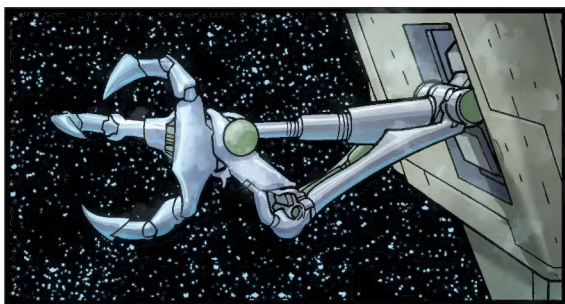
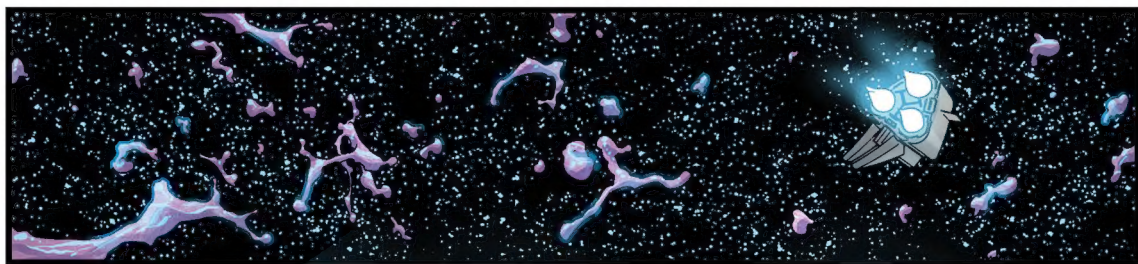
IN A WAY... THAT MADE HIM A GREATER MAN THAN I.

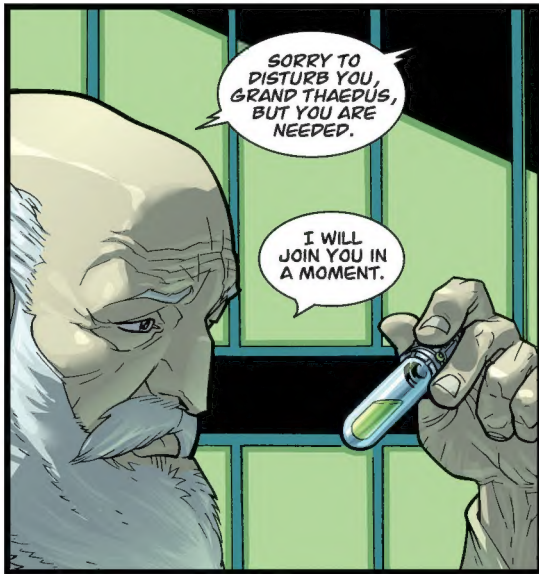
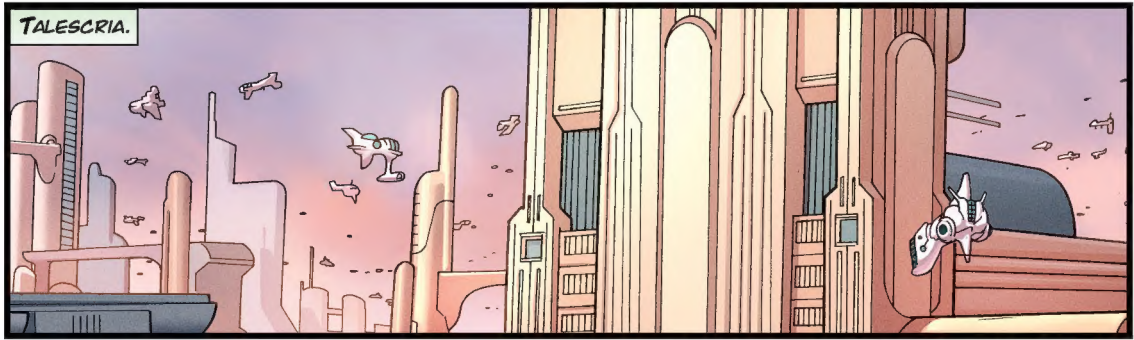


COME.

WE SHOULDN'T LEAVE MARK UNATTENDED FOR LONG.







WE'VE BEEN BUSY WHILE NOLAN AND ALLEN WERE ON THEIR MISSION TO EARTH. THE KLAXUS EXTRACT WE HARVESTED FROM THE SINLAK BEETLES HAS BEEN PROVEN EFFECTIVE AGAINST VILTRUMITE TISSUE, AND ALL COALITION TROOPS ARE BEING ARMED WITH KLAXUS EXTRACT-LACED ARMAMENTS.

WE STARTED ON THE DRIDELL OUTPOST, WHICH THE COUNCIL AGREED WOULD BE THE BEST STAGING GROUND FOR A FIRST STRIKE AGAINST VILTRUMITE HELD CIVILIZATIONS.

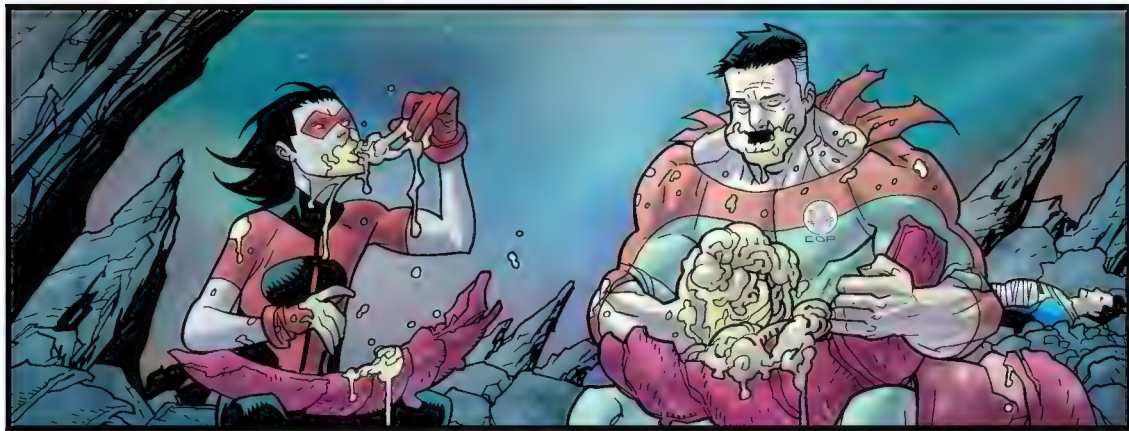
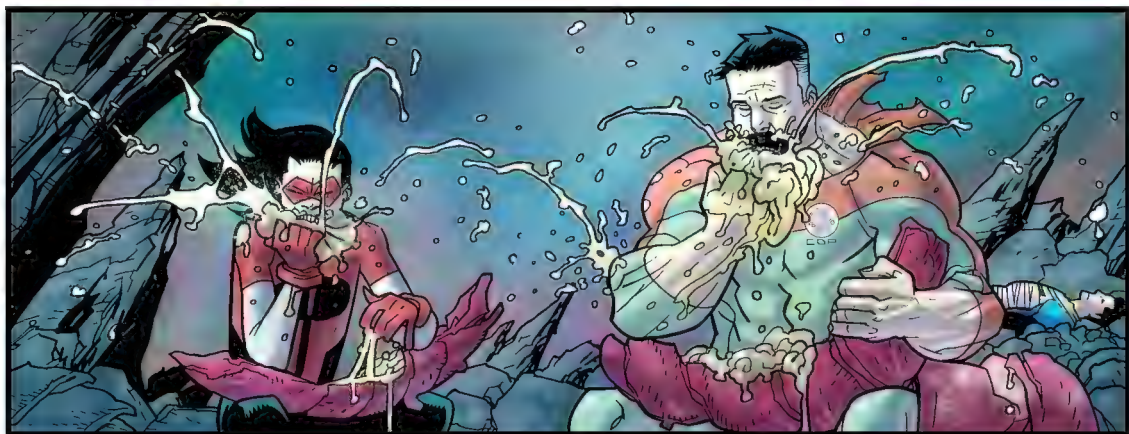
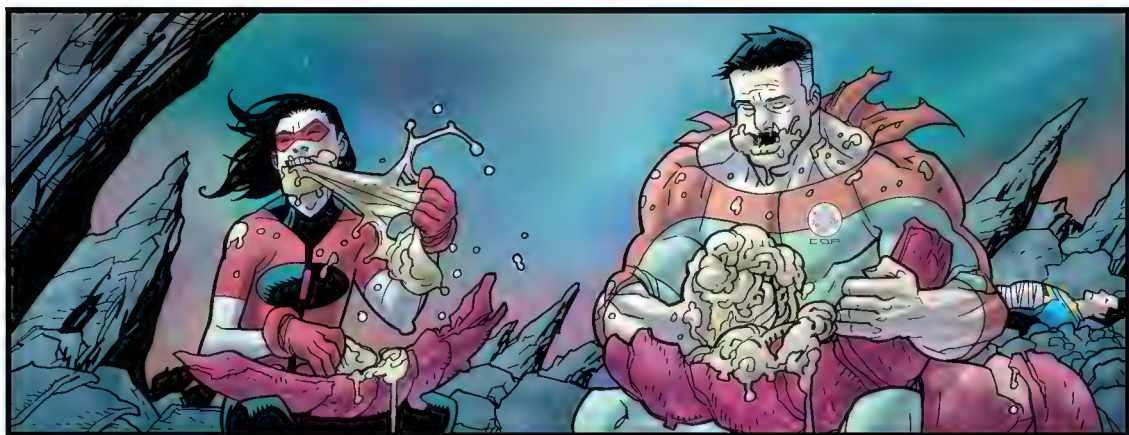
THE ATTACK ON CAPTAIN PIKELL'S SHIP WHILE RETURNING FROM EARTH IS SERVING AS THE FIRST STRIKE BY THE VILTRUMITES. IT DEMANDS A RESPONSE...

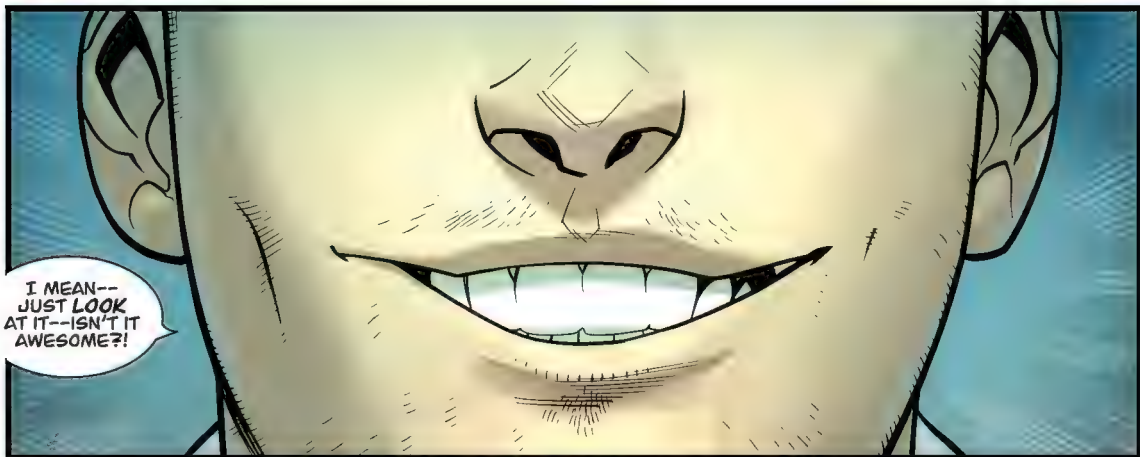
WE REQUIRE THE FINAL WORD FROM YOU, FOR THIS WAR TO BEGIN.









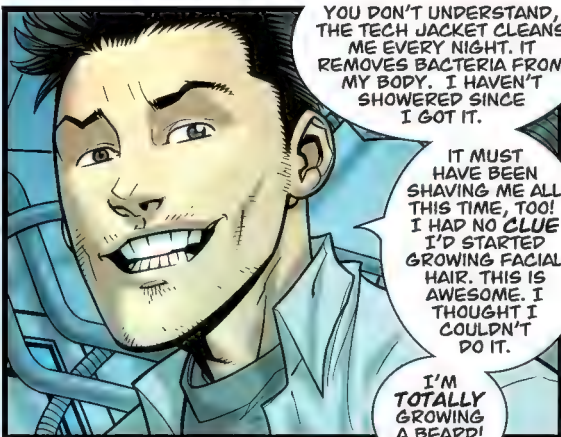


I MEAN--
JUST LOOK
AT IT--ISN'T IT
AWESOME?!



I CAN SEE IT, IT'S
GREAT... REALLY.
DO YOU HAVE TO
KEEP BRINGING IT
UP? IT'S JUST
FACIAL HAIR.

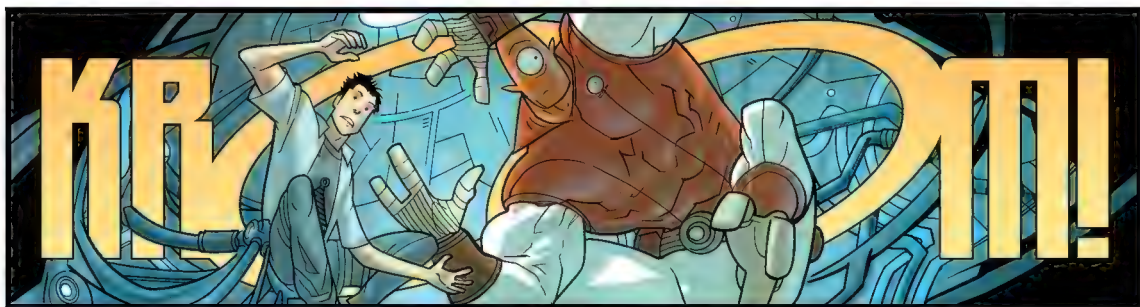
THIS IS
WORSE THAN
WHEN YOU WERE
EXPLAINING
WHERE YOUR
EXCREMENT
WENT...



YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND,
THE TECH JACKET CLEANS
ME EVERY NIGHT. IT
REMOVES BACTERIA FROM
MY BODY. I HAVEN'T
SHOWERED SINCE
I GOT IT.

IT MUST
HAVE BEEN
SHAVING ME ALL
THIS TIME, TOO!
I HAD NO CLUE
I'D STARTED
GROWING FACIAL
HAIR. THIS IS
AWESOME. I
THOUGHT I
COULDN'T
DO IT.

I'M
TOTALLY
GROWING
A BEARD!



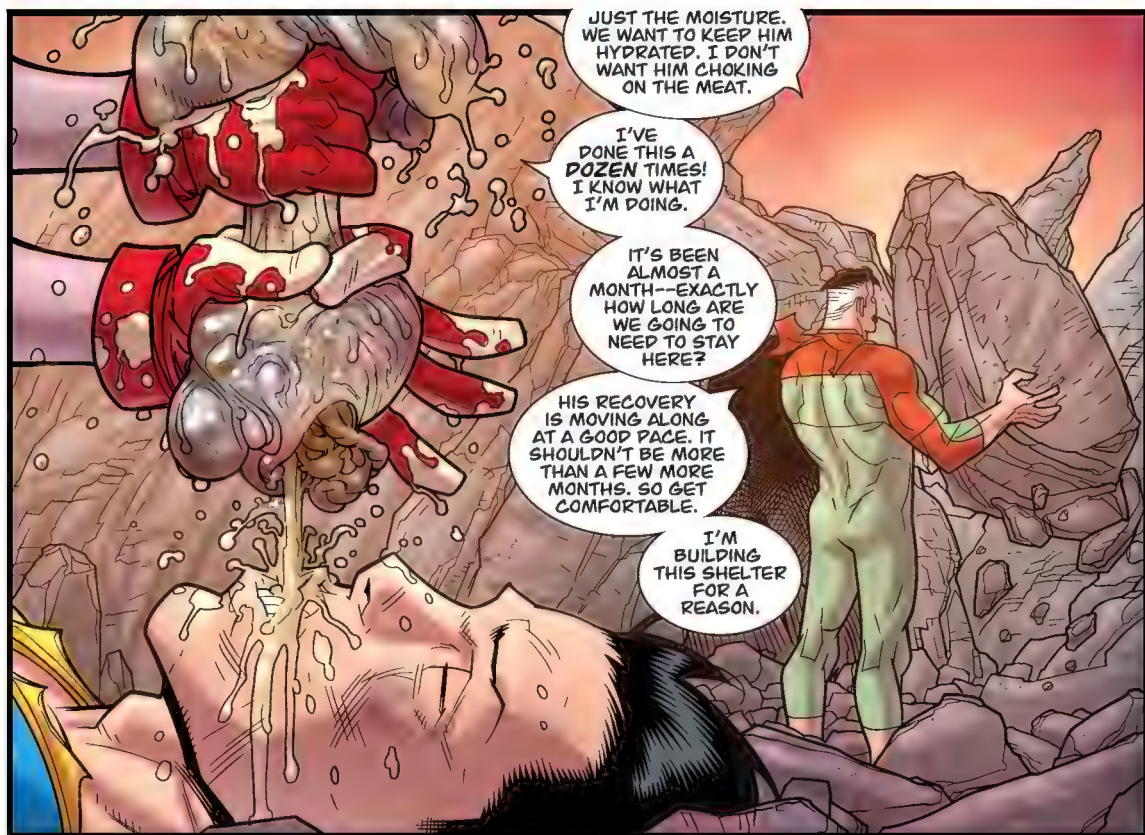
WHAT
THE HECK
WAS
THAT?!



I'VE GOT A
TRACKING SIGNAL
IN MY GEAR. IF
YOU DON'T KNOW
THE EXACT
FREQUENCY IT'S
UNDETECTABLE--
BUT IT CAN BE
USED TO FIND
ME IF I'M
EVER LOST.

SO I
BELIEVE
THAT WAS
THE CAVALRY
SHOWING UP.





JUST THE MOISTURE. WE WANT TO KEEP HIM HYDRATED. I DON'T WANT HIM CHOKING ON THE MEAT.

I'VE DONE THIS A DOZEN TIMES! I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING.

IT'S BEEN ALMOST A MONTH--EXACTLY HOW LONG ARE WE GOING TO NEED TO STAY HERE?

HIS RECOVERY IS MOVING ALONG AT A GOOD PACE. IT SHOULDN'T BE MORE THAN A FEW MORE MONTHS. SO GET COMFORTABLE.

I'M BUILDING THIS SHELTER FOR A REASON.

MY MOM, NOT MY REAL MOM, MY EARTH MOM, MARK'S MOM, UH--DEBBIE.

YOU REALLY THINK YOU LOVE HER?



I KNOW I DO.

IT TOOK ME MONTHS OF HEALING IN A VILTRUMITE PRISON TO MAKE ME REALIZE IT... BUT YES, I DO.



WE HAVE AFFECTION, THE VILTRUMITES, BUT WE DON'T CARE FOR EACH OTHER LIKE HUMANS DO. OUR LIVES ARE SO LONG THAT OVER TIME WE GROW DISTANT, IT'S HARD TO FORM A BOND WITH SOMEONE OVER THAT MUCH TIME.

YOU'LL NEVER FIND ONE OF US WHO WILL ADMIT IT-- BUT WE LIVE VERY LONELY, SOLITARY LIVES. ESPECIALLY WITH OUR NUMBERS SO DEPLETED.

LIVING ON EARTH CHANGED ME. SEEING HUMANS GROW SO CLOSE TO EACH OTHER, CARING SO DEEPLY FOR THEIR LOVED ONES IN THE SHORT AMOUNT OF TIME ALLOTTED FOR THEM... IT WAS SPECIAL, SOMETHING TO BE ADMIRER.



AT FIRST I WAS A SPECTATOR, WATCHING AS THEY LIVED THEIR LIVES. ACTING AS ONE OF THEM, GROWING CLOSE TO DEBBIE, PRETENDING TO FORM A BOND.

BUT WHY HER? DID I JUST PICK HER AT RANDOM?



AT FIRST I THOUGHT I HAD, I TOLD MYSELF THAT WAS THE ONLY WAY.

I COULDN'T ACTUALLY CARE FOR THIS FRAIL CREATURE.



BUT I DID. I HAD A CONNECTION TO HER.

WE HAD MARK, TOGETHER. RAISED HIM NOT AS A VILTRUMITE, BUT AS A HUMAN.



I THOUGHT I WAS BIDDING MY TIME, WAITING TO SEE IF MARK DEVELOPED POWERS... WAITING TO SEE HOW HUMAN DNA MIXED WITH VILTRUMITE DNA... IF HE'D HAVE POWERS AND IF SO, HOW CLOSE TO VILTRUMITE STRENGTH HE WAS.

BUT I NEVER LOOKED AT THAT LIFE AS A CHORE. I ENJOYED IT.

OVER TIME, I FELL INTO THE ROLE OF HUMAN HUSBAND, HUMAN FATHER... SO MUCH SO THAT WHEN MARK GOT HIS POWERS...

...IT WAS A GREAT BURDEN MORE THAN ANYTHING.



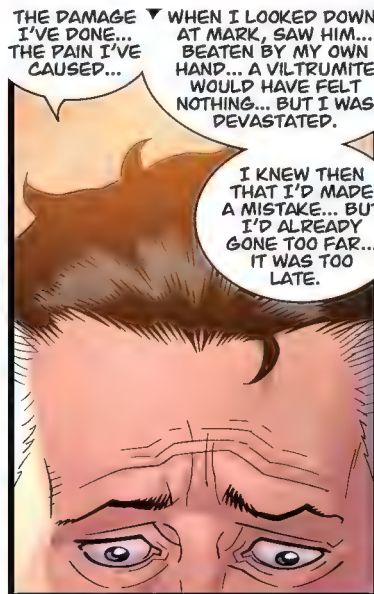
I HAD TO GO BACK TO BEING A VILTRUMITE. I HAD TO DO WHAT I WAS PUT THERE TO DO.

WHETHER I WANTED TO OR NOT.



I SPENT A LOT OF TIME ALONE, THEN... CONSIDERING IF I COULD IGNORE MY DUTY, CONTINUE LIVING THE LIE I'D ENJOYED SO MUCH... WITH THE WOMAN I'D GROWN TO LOVE.

IN THE END... I CHOSE TO CARRY OUT MY MISSION... DESPITE HOW CONFLICTED I WAS.

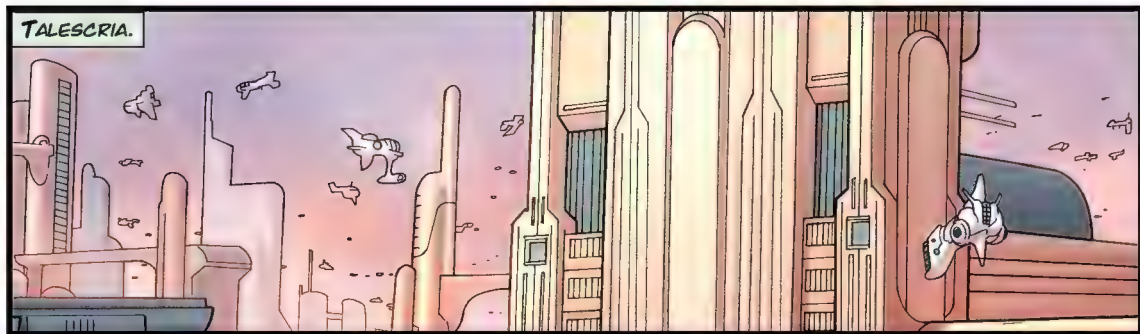


THE DAMAGE I'VE DONE... THE PAIN I'VE CAUSED...

WHEN I LOOKED DOWN AT MARK, SAW HIM... BEATEN BY MY OWN HAND... A VILTRUMITE WOULD HAVE FELT NOTHING... BUT I WAS DEVASTATED.

I KNEW THEN THAT I'D MADE A MISTAKE... BUT I'D ALREADY GONE TOO FAR... IT WAS TOO LATE.

TALESCRIA.



ALLEN, IT IS GOOD TO HAVE YOU BACK. TECH JACKET, IT IS GOOD TO MEET YOU. THE TWO OF YOU WILL BE VERY VALUABLE.

ESPECIALLY WITH THE DISAPPEARANCE OF NOLAN AND HIS SONS... SOMETHING THAT HAS ME VERY TROUBLED.

I'LL NEED THE TWO OF YOU BATTLE-READY IN A FEW HOURS. WE'RE SENDING YOU TO THE PLANET OOLA, WHERE THE VILTRUMITE FORCES HAVE FORTIFIED AN OOLIAN BASE AND ARE EFFECTIVELY DEFENDING AGAINST OUR FORCES.

THE PLANET OOLA WILL MAKE A PERFECT STAGING GROUND TO MOVE OUR FORCES DEEPER INTO VILTRUMITE TERRITORY. IT IS **ESSENTIAL** TO THE WAR EFFORT.

I HOPE YOUR TIME HIDING ON THAT VILTRUMITE SHIP WASN'T TOO TAXING.

I'M GROWING A BEARD.



BUT THAT'S CERTAINLY NOT SOMETHING I'D FEEL THE NEED TO RANDOMLY BRING UP. I, UH... I'M KIND OF NERVOUS.

I'LL BE TOTALLY READY TO GO TO THAT PLANET WHEN YOU NEED ME, SIR.

I WON'T LET YOU DOWN... I...

I'LL SHUT UP NOW.

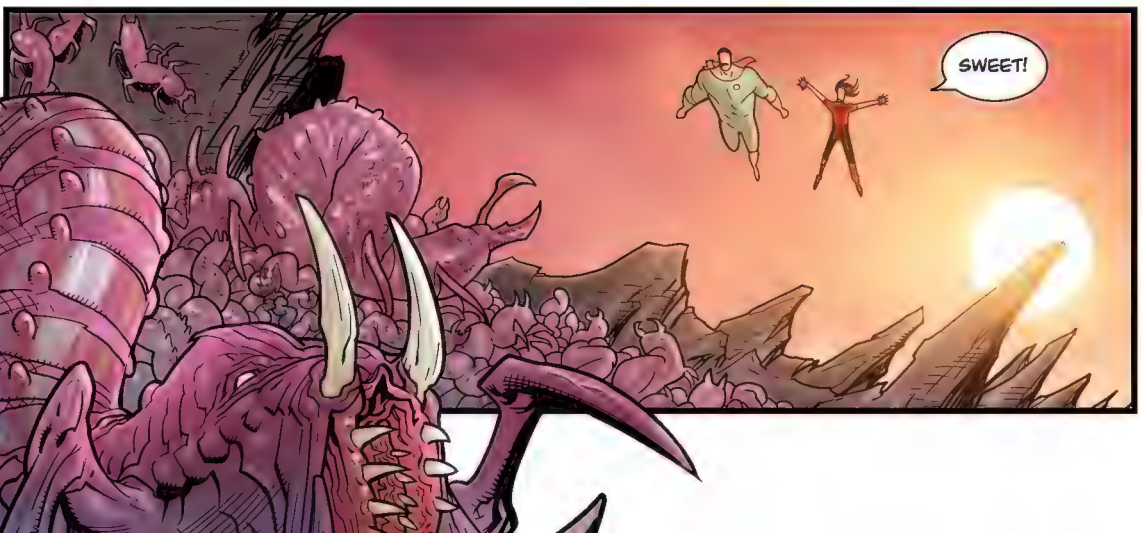
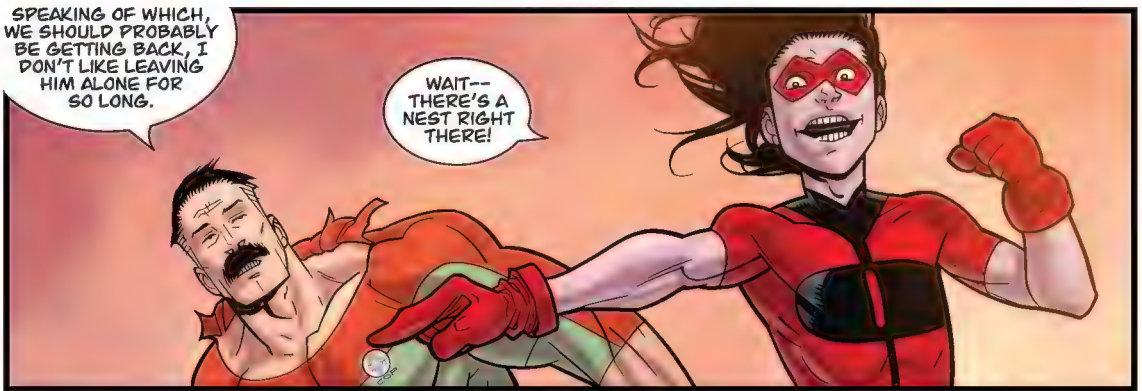


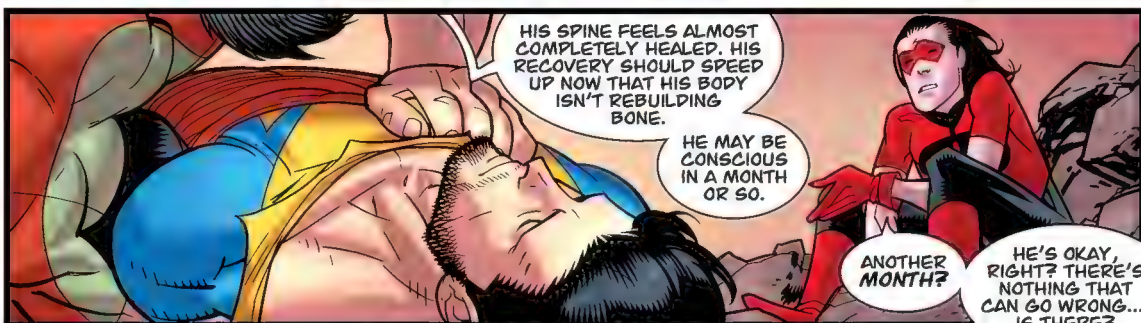
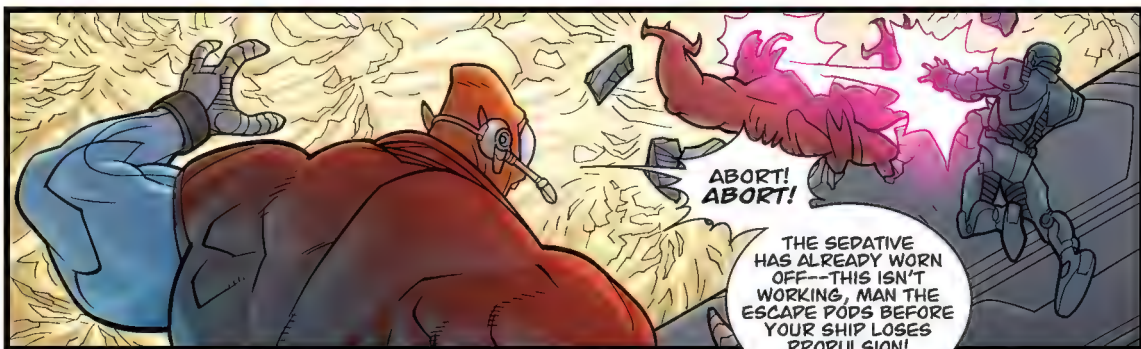


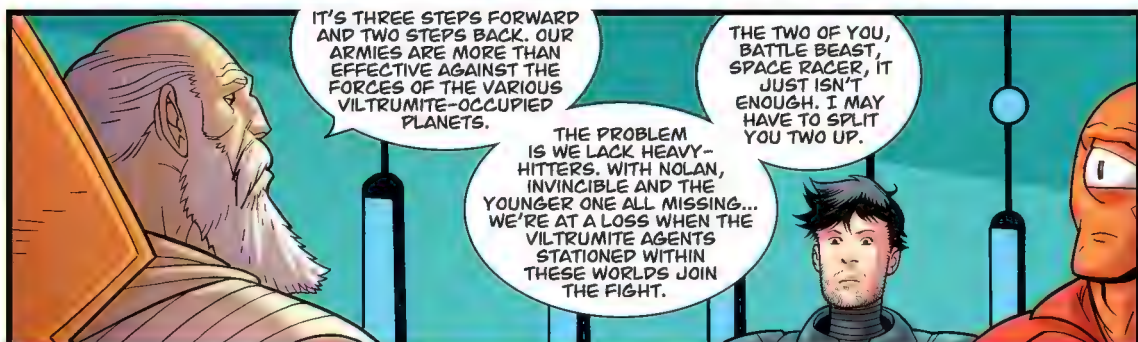
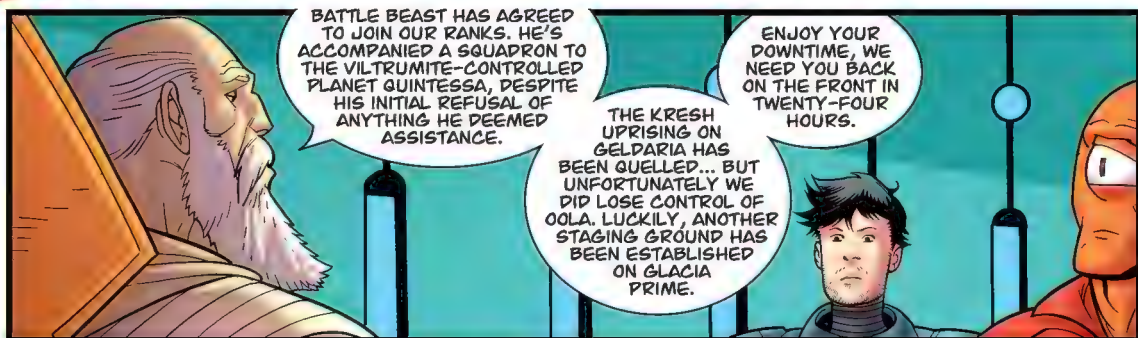
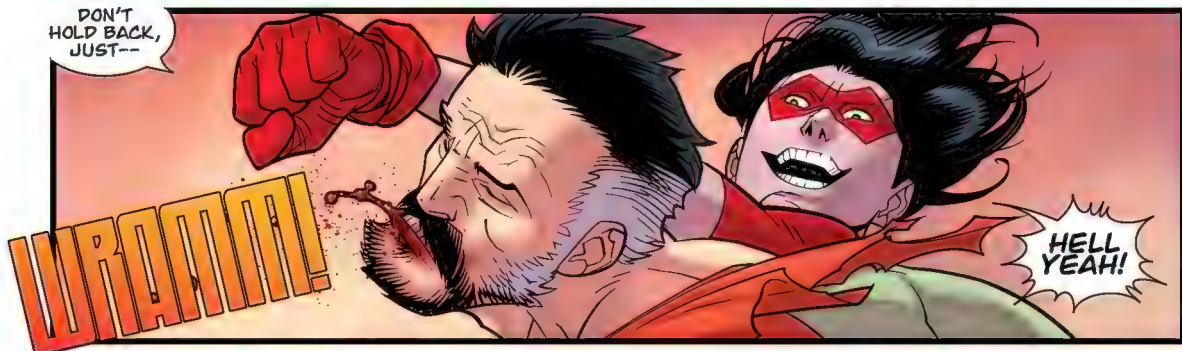
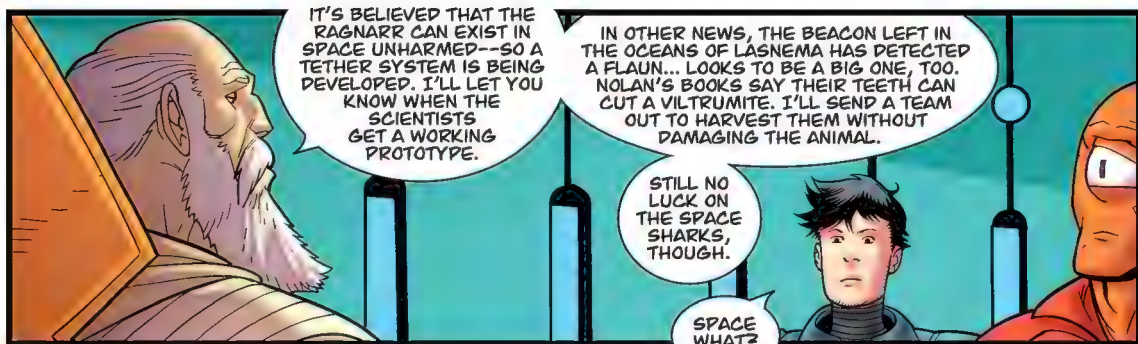
THAT'S ONLY NATURAL. I CAN'T SAY I'VE NEVER FOUND MYSELF SADDENED BY HER PASSING.

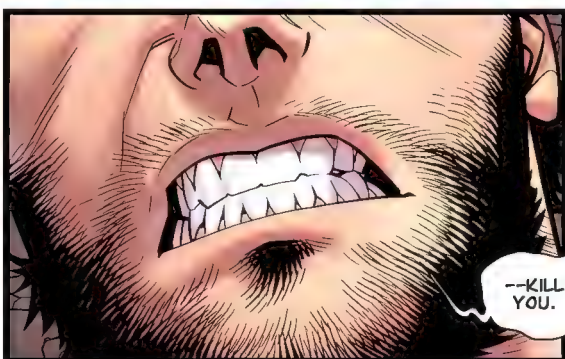
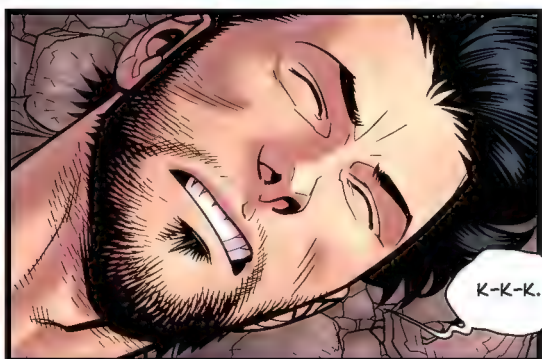
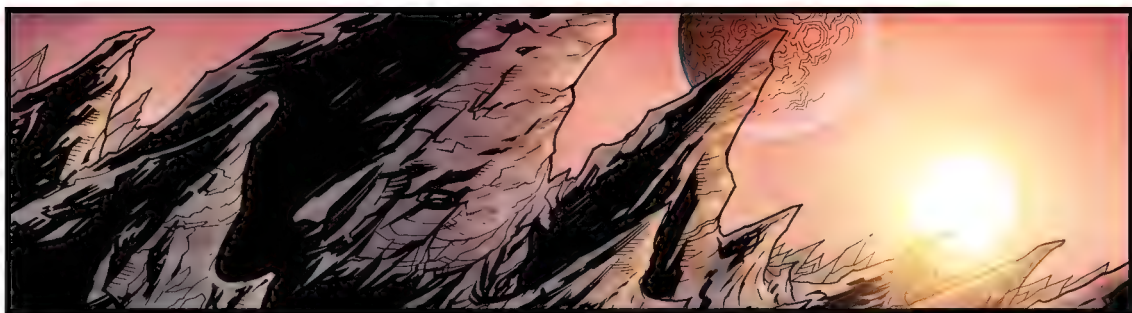


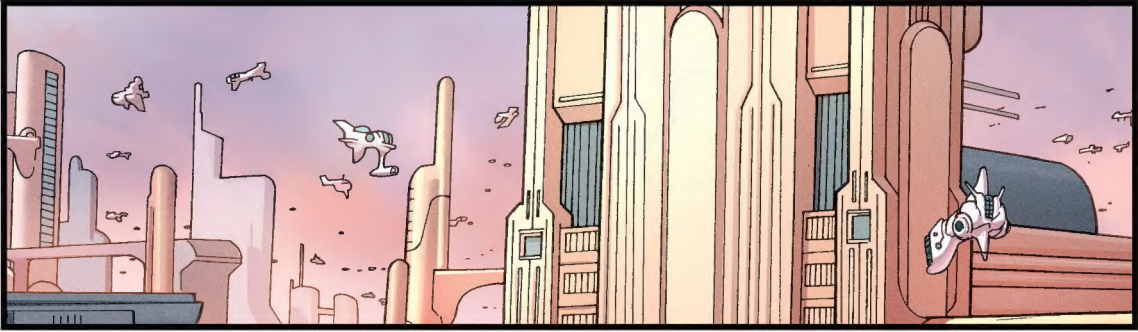
SPEAKING OF WHICH, WE SHOULD PROBABLY BE GETTING BACK, I DON'T LIKE LEAVING HIM ALONE FOR SO LONG.











THE FIGHTING ON DRAKUS MINOR HAS HALTED FOR THE MOMENT. COMMUNICATION COMING IN FROM GELDARIA INDICATES THINGS ARE QUIET IN THAT QUADRANT.

HELLO?

HOW ARE THINGS ON YOUR END?

BATTLE BEAST IS REFUSING A LEAVE PERIOD FOLLOWING HIS VICTORY OVER THE VILTRUMITES ON QUINTESSA. THAT ONE IS VERY DEDICATED.

YOU'VE BEEN FEEDING US INFORMATION FOR YEARS-- BUT IT'S NOT ENOUGH. WE ARE STILL LOSING PLANETS TO THE COALITION.

THAT IS UNACCEPTABLE.

WE WILL STRIKE THE COALITION HEADQUARTERS ON TALESCRIA. YOU WILL SHUT DOWN THEIR DEFENSES AT THE TIME BEING TRANSMITTED TO YOU.

RESPOND.

IT WILL BE DONE.

WHAT? WHAT WILL BE DONE?

WHO ARE YOU TALKING TO?

WRITE US @

INVINCIBLE

C/O FUNK-O-TRON

P.O. BOX 1870

RICHMOND, KY 40476

INVINCIBLE@FUNKOTRON.COM

PEN INVINCIBLE PALS

Hey folks,

Correction:

The cover to Invincible #72 was inked by Dexter Vines, and pages 1-9 were inked by Ryan Ottley. We apologize to these gents for not properly crediting their hard work.

Now, how did you all like this issue? After the intensity of the battle with Conquest, it's a welcome change to have a little humor. Plus: this issue is a great chance for you to become fond of Oliver, as he will be taking the role of Invincible after Mark's inevitable death in issue 75.

Less chatter! I am eager for you all to read the letter below...

So Mark and Eve weren't using protection? Was it a "Screw it, we're superheroes. We don't have to worry about that" situation? Are we alluding to super-sperm here?

Robert, care to explain what happens between the panels of this all-ages book?

No, I don't. Let's just say that condoms aren't always 100% effective and can break and whatever. So let's just say "something happened" and leave it at that.

These are the things I think about when I'm not reading your awesome book(s).

Tyler Slayton
Downers Grove, IL

It's okay. Like me, you grew up watching Mallrats too often.

Man, I LOVE Mallrats. -Robert

Kirkman and Co.,

I have to say, getting to read both Invincible and The Walking Dead 71 in the same sitting today was pretty sweet indeed, so thanks for that right off the bat... It's crazy that they are in sync now (I think it's kind of cool).

Don't expect that to be a regular occurrence. Right now we're trying to get the books out as quick as they're done. Once we're on track, you should expect to see one Kirkbook for almost every week in the month.

I loved the reunion between Mark's parents, as I had been anticipating it for quite some time. No Earth for a while, eh? Nice... I expect plenty of sick space visuals then, which always look tasty in this book. Try not to beat yourself up over the delays with the books, by the way. Invincible Returns and Invincible 71 were top notch, through and through. I'm looking forward to The Viltrumite War, its possible connection to Image United, and all the shakeups you have set up for the next few months. Bring it.

Oh, it's already been broughten.

On a related note, I managed to clandestinely find a stash of Tech Jacket recently, so it was pretty cool seeing him in Invincible this

month (with his own short no less). I dug that book a lot (very fun) and I sincerely look forward to the new backups. I hope to see more of him.

Thanks to everyone out there (at the end of this FCBD 2010) at Team Invincible for making this Saturday that much sweeter.

Cam Stylez

Tech Jacket's a cool character. You will see a lot more of him, and with any luck, we will have some exciting news for the character, to boot (he's getting his own cereal. Sorry Kirkman, I couldn't keep my mouth shut).

Hi Robert, Ryan,

Lately, Ryan's been drawing Invincible flying with his left hand extended outwards. So I was wondering if Mark was a lefty? I noticed it because I'm a righty myself and when I was pretending to be Invincible it was a little awkward for me.

Oh man, Robert... I am too foul-minded to answer this...

How do you think I feel?! -Robert

Sorry if this has already been discussed or if there are a million drawings of Invincible with his right hand extended as I am a new reader. Both of you got me via Haunt, in case you were interested. Keep up the brilliant work.

Paul

Well, now that we have you hooked on Invincible, Paul, we can't wait for you to fall in love with Tech Jacket! Speaking of which, Andrew J. Shaw has something to say about TJ.

Dear Robert, Invincible reads right!...film at 11! I mean this has always been a book I've supported, read, even admired; but I never said it was any good--till now!! The Viltrumite War? What's not to love?! Tech Jacket? Really my first exposure to the guy, but he's better than I would've thought! But is Tech Jacket more than just a blue Iron Man with stretchy machine-limbs...? Sure, why not. Twists and turns, new costumes, it was just pretty darn good, I guess. In fact: best comic of the night--Thumbs Up! INVINCIMAN! Huh? You like? I'm still wondering how you pronounce FCO...

Sincerely,

Andrew J. Shaw

For starters, Andrew Shaw, I am sorry that I did not give you the respect you deserve (see most recent Fang Mail over at Wolf-Man land). Things will be different, I promise.

You're absolutely right: there's nothing to not love. Wow, I just used the double negative... and I'm the editor!

Tech Jacket's a little more intergalactic than Iron Man. He also hasn't hit the sauce yet, so you won't find him mumbling about peeing in his Tech Jacket anytime soon (although Allen the Alien has).

And while I respect you oodles... I do not like Invinciman.

Here's how you pronounce FCO: Eff, Cee, Oh.

I think it's funny to point out that when Tech Jacket launched all we heard were comparisons to GUYVER, but now Iron Man is hot so it's gotta be an Iron Man rip-off, right? Next year it'll be Green Lantern. Maybe it's not a rip-off at all? Maybe it's just a kid in a cool robot suit that has awesome powers and does cosmic stuff... like STAR KID. -Robert

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I'm sitting at my computer desk, tasty beverage in hand, having just finished my 7th read-through of this wonderful series. My anticipation for the Viltrumite War has me craving all that it is the Invincible Universe. Kirkmania forums, Image schedules, my LCS boards: I've been frequenting all of these like crazy lately because I'm so excited. (I particularly enjoyed the "lost-plot-development, scavenger hunt" you initiated on the forums last week. Watching a few of the regulars scramble to find the answer to your question was pretty damn entertaining.)

Scavenger hunt? Is that what's been keeping you so busy these days, Robert?

Anyways, I just had a few comments/queries/quandaries from my most recent read-through that I wanted to run by you:

1. FCO's jump on in Issue 51 is just down-right amazing. There really is nothing else to add to that sentence. I'm not sure if you've answered this before in your wonderful mail section, but why did you change the costume? I personally was not a huge fan of the blue/black, and I am really excited about the return of the blue/yellow (Ryan, please slip in the fingerless gloves on one panel. Thanks!) But during this read-through, I found myself asking why. Was there any reason to changing it up? Just curious, that's all.

Fake answer: the costume was symbolic of a darker time in Mark's life. He was trying to adjust to some of the darkness that being half-Viltrumite entails, and the costume change reflects that. Now that he's back to a more grounded superhero, he's in his classic duds again.

Real answer: Robert?

The book had been running long enough that I thought it was time for a costume change stunt. Spider-Man does it all the time, so I figured why not? I knew fans would more than likely hate it, and it was always planned to be temporary... but it got us a sales spike for issue 51 (the Jim Lee cover helped, I'm sure) and sales climbed during the time he was in the blue costume--and then spiked again when he got his old costume back. Now, I don't mean to sound cutthroat, talking about sales and all, but the reality is if we don't stay in the press, keep things lively, and keep people interested and sales high, then we don't last forever and I think that you readers want this book to last forever just as much as I do. So why was the costume switched? Because it's a fun stunt that all long-lasting superhero books do. And I knew that people would hate it at first and then grow to love it. And that's what happened. I'm already getting letters asking when we're going to go back to that costume because people actually MISS it. Already. It's awesome. So expect at least a brief return to that costume eventually... maybe for issue 150. -Robert

2. Favorite moment of the entire series was definitely Oliver's FIRST BLOOD with the Mauler Twins. Shocking, hysterical, and beautiful all at the same time. I'm really looking forward to seeing the little guy in action in the Viltrumite War. Once it's over, when and how many times is he gonna hook up with April?

Dude, Oliver's gay. Can't you tell?

3. Best single panel by far is 'Vince after having destroyed the Martian squadron. In my opinion, that's a paradigm moment for our hero. Especially having just punked the shit out of Immortal in the first fight with the Sequids. Any true fan of the series had been waiting a long time for 'Vince to put that jackass in his place. (Well, since Omni-Man ripped him in half... for a second time...) Ryan was a real beast on that entire arc. My jaw still drops when I see the Martian space-ships. Simply awesome.

This is not a question/ query. Thanks for your COMMENT.

4. Favorite NFL team?

Lakers! J/K LOLZ. Robert doesn't do football.

I enjoy watching it but I follow no teams and usually don't care who's winning. I usually pick whoever's losing when I come in or the favored team of whoever I'm with and root for them. -Robert

5. Have you ever thought about selling the beard for charity?

Ugh, only for a profit! And he won't part with that thing for the finest rubies that India has to offer.

That pretty much does it for this run-through. I truly enjoy all of your work, sir. When ANY of your books are in my pulls, it really does make my week that much easier. Thank you for that simple joy.

Best of luck and keep kicking ass,

Evan

Thanks, Evan! You keep kicking ass!

Wow, what a letters column!

Thanks again for your darling little letters, pals. Next issue, the boys keep on supplying that Viltrumite War goodness, and epic battles ensue.

Keep your eyes open for the Invincible Presents: Atom Eve trade paperback in July. There's smooth great stuff from Benito Cereno and Nate Bellegarde.

Now, enjoy a stellar Tech Jacket backup (Editor's Note: the previous sentence was written before seeing all the finished pages to said backup).

-Sina Grace

TECH JACKET

CHAPTER 3 of 8

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DON'T MISS THE NEXT ISSUE!



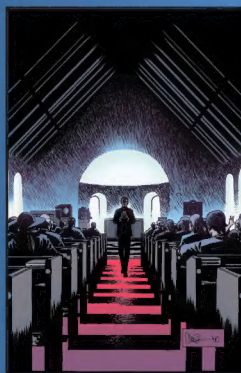
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